



Republican Policy Committee

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'Break the Logjam?' — President's Party Perpetuates It

Day 15: President's Party Holds Health Care Hostage

It has now been fifteen days since the Senate unanimously passed the Kassebaum health care bill, S. 1028. The House passed its version by a large margin in March. In the more than two weeks since Senate passage, the House and Senate have been unable to meet in conference to work out a final version of the bill. Why? Minority party obstructionism. In what has become a familiar pattern of delay by the President's party, the Minority Leader and his followers continue to block the naming of Senators to negotiations.

Yesterday Majority Leader Dole called the Senate Minority party's bluff that they were interested in helping American workers by offering votes on a Clinton gas tax repeal, the right for employers and employees to work cooperatively, and a minimum wage increase. The true Minority party position was revealed: Gridlock. Senate Minority Leader Daschle was quoted on the front page of today's *Washington Post*:

"We're obviously in a situation where we aren't going to get anything done. . . . until we resolve this impasse."

Majority Leader Dole accurately observed, at the time that Minority Leader Daschle meant resolve the impasse, but only on their terms:

"If my colleagues in the minority are entitled to vote on what they want, why are not my colleagues in the majority entitled to vote on what they want to vote on?"

Evidently, the President's party has added health care to their group of hostages. It is not enough that the Minority party has switched position on the importance of this legislation, but they have even changed gears on items they will accept in the final conference bill. By logjamming a bill that got unanimous support, Senators Daschle and Kennedy have taken obstruction to the level of metaphysics: They have blocked the health care bill's resolution not over what is in the legislation but over what might be!

The members of the President's party have become prisoners of their own political tactics. Now they intend to imprison health care reform as well. Fifteen days and counting. Their own president has called for ending the logjam.

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